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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /080 W
---------- 043124
R 090847Z JAN 76T
FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8671
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING

UNCLAS HONG KONG 0311

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR CH HK
SUBJECT: LOCAL HONG KONG MEDIA REACTION TO THE DEATH OF PRC PREMIER

1. ALL MAJOR HONG KONG NEWSPAPERS EXCEPT THE PRO-KMT HONGKONG TIMES FRONT PAGED REPORTS OF THE DEATH OF PRC PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE SHORT LEAD TIME FOLLOWING THE PRC'S 3:00 A.M. JANUARY 9 ANNOUNCEMENT, ONLY TWO PAPERS CARRIED EDITORIAL COMMENT ON CHOU'S DEATH.

2. THE INDEPENDENT MING PAO OBSERVED THAT, WITH CHOU'S DEATH EXPECTED AND TENG HSIAO-PING ALREADY ACTING PREMIER, EVERYTHING IS IN ORDER. THZ EDITOGIAL.OO HOWEVER, NOTED THAT CHOU HAD PERSONALLY OVERSEEN AND ADMINISTERED CHINA'S MODERATED POLICIES AND THAT "ULTRA-RIGHTISTS" HAD ATTACKED EDUCATION POLICIES AT A TIME WHEN THE PREMIER'S CONDITION WAS DETERIORATING. THE PAPER PREDICTED THAT IN THE LONGER TERM, THERE WILL BE AN INTENSIFICATION OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN TWO LINES AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT TENG WILL CONTINUE TO
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FOLLOW CHOU'S POLICIES.

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3. THE PRO-PRC KWAI PAO ALSO OBSERVED THAT THE PREMIER'S POWERS HAD ALREADY BEEN TRANSFERRED TO TENG WITH MAO'S APPARENT BLESSING. IT FORESAW LITTLE CHANGE IN EITHER CHINA'S DEMESTIC OR FOREIGN POLICIES. HONG KONG, IT SAID, WILL CONTINUE TO SURVIVE WITH ANY FALL OF THE LOCAL STOCK MARKET HERE DUE TO SPECULATORS.
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